

# Teacher-Student Interaction and Secondary School Student Academic Performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between teacher-student interaction and secondary school student academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey and correlational research methods were employed for the study. The Teacher-student Interaction Questionnaire (TSIQ) was used to collect data from a sample of 1,074 respondents. A validated inventory was also used for the study. Proportionate simple random sampling technique was used to select 376 teachers and 707 students from 24 public secondary schools in the state. The study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between teacher-student interaction and secondary school student academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was concluded that

teacher-student interaction has a positive influence on secondary school student academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It has been established that teachers-students interaction is one of the determinants of secondary school student academic performance.

**Keywords:** Academic Performance, Interaction, Performance, Secondary School, Teacher-Student Interaction

## 1. Introduction

Secondary education is generally looked at as the base for development of other sectors of the education system. It provides for primary school graduates to have the means for higher education and also provides students who are unable to go for higher education with the necessary knowledge and skills for vocational jobs. As stated inside the National Policy of Education published by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), the goals of secondary education are to prepare individuals for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education.

It is rather unfortunate that secondary schools seem not to measure up to the standard expected of them. The researcher noted that the overall performance of college students in public secondary schools in the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) conducted via the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in Ekiti State has been very negative. Olaleye (2011) discovered that a growing failure rate of college students could be noticed in the every year decline in their overall performance in the Senior School Certificate.

According to West African Examinations Council (2018) reports, in 2018, 786,016 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 49.98 percent pass; in 2017, 923,486 candidates obtained five credits pass in English Language and Mathematics representing 59.22 percent pass; in 2016, 878,040 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 52.97 percent pass; in 2015, 616,370 candidates obtained five credits pass in English Language and Mathematics representing 38.68 per cent pass; in 2014, 62,499 candidates obtained five credit pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 22 percent pass; and in 2013, 86,612 candidates obtained five credits and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 36.57 percent pass.

In addition to the above, in 2012, 649,156 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 38.81 percent pass; and in 2011, only 30.99 percent of the 1,540,250 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics. In the same vein, the Quality Education Assurance Agency (2010) reported that the percentage of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects and above including English Language and Mathematics was about 25 percent in Nigeria.

The above dwindling in academic performance of students who sat for the West African Schools Certificate Examination in Nigeria is the same in Ekiti State secondary schools. In support, and according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2019), in 2018, 10,827 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 56.81 percent pass; in 2017, 14,287 candidates obtained five credits pass in English Language and Mathematics representing 71.83 percent pass; in 2016, 10,209 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 56.52 percent pass;

in 2015, 9,211 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 43.95 percent pass; and in 2014, 7,146 candidates obtained five credits pass and above in English Language and Mathematics representing 32.68 percent pass.

It appears the level of teacher-student interaction in Ekiti State secondary schools is too low. The researchers observed that some teachers make themselves available to only students who have religious, political, ethnic, and cultural affiliation with them. Hence, students may not feel happy if teachers discriminate against them on the above points and this may have a negative effect on academic performance of the students. In support of the above statement, Falade (2018); Faremi and Jita (2018), said that lack of motivational techniques in teaching and learning manner might be answerable for the perceived teacher and student ineffectiveness.

It was observed that teachers do not mix freely with students and that the teachers do not identify the students by their names. Ajayi (2019) buttressed the above statement when he observed that good teachers learn their students' names early in the school year and use their names when addressing them. Teachers supposed to have good knowledge of their students with respect to their interests, ability, weakness, and differences. This may assist teachers in deciding the method of teaching to use during lesson. It appears, if teachers are not free with the students, they may not know their interests and challenge ability as this may affect students' academic performance. Terry (2008) opined that a fundamental question for a student is, does my teacher like me? Given a rigorous, aligned curriculum, the answer to this simple question is our best predictor of student achievement.

Meanwhile, it appears, some teachers are harsh and hostile to the students. It has been observed that some teachers are teacher-centred during lesson as they do not allow some students to contribute to class discussion or allow them to ask questions. Class may not be lively for effective teaching and learning if teachers dominate the class and do not encourage some of their students to participate adequately in lesson. Therefore, this set of students may not be able to gain much in the class and this may affect their academic performance.

So, at this time of poor academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria, it is important to determine if teacher-student relationship is really a factor in enhancing student academic performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Academic Performance*

According to Kayode and Ayodele (2015), students' academic performance means the outcome of determination; hard work of student academic pursuit; how students deal with their studies; and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. Ali (2013) opined that student academic performance is a measure of the degree of success in performing specific tasks in a subject area of study by students after a learning experience. It can be viewed that without students attempting either internal or external examination, it may be difficult to determine the academic performance effectiveness and vice versa.

Ali (2013) went further to say that in educational institutions, success is measured by instructional overall performance or how well a student meets standards set by way of the examination bodies. Standardised tests are taken by secondary school students in order to measure their performance.

According to Ajayi (2019), when determining academic performance, emphasis should be put on the use of grades in examination and that grades may want to serve as a prediction degree and as a criterion degree. Popoola (2017) also said that academic performance is largely identified by a range of statistical indicators and that there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects of procedural knowledge are most important such as skill or declarative knowledge such as fact.

Meanwhile, Adebule (2013) opined that the performance of students is good when the majority passed the examination and there is poor performance when the results or outcomes are bad. A student who is unable to perform well in either internal or external examination is said to have poor result, and is adjudged to have failed in his academic pursuit; and a student who performed up to the standard given by the teacher, the school or the examining body is assumed to have scored good and is adjudged to have passed the examination. A student who fails to score the required grades to qualify him for admission or for job placement is assumed to have poor academic performance. Okorie (2014) asserted that poor academic performance is meant by the examiner as falling below an expected standard.

## *2.2 Teacher-Student Interaction*

In any situation, learning depends on a great deal of the patterns and structure of inter-personal relationships that exist within the academic arena especially, between a student and another student. According to Diedrich (2010), a huge range of studies reveal that teachers can encourage their college students to perform nicely within the classroom in the event that they take time to build relationships and engage with the students. In the phrases of Whitaker (2004), teachers ought to strongly consider that building relationships is critical to the motivation process towards learning. According to one of the studies carried out by Nugent (2009), it was suggested that if teachers take the time to build relationships they can motivate their students to learn. Whitaker (2004) lays emphasis on the need to capitalise on this notion as a way of improving student academic performance.

As findings from studies demonstrate that teacher-student interactions have effect on college student overall academic performance, a few parents do no longer like close teacher-student interplay as necessary but Whitaker (2004) said, teachers recognise the importance of connecting with their students, that if they are unable to connect with them emotionally then influencing their minds may be impossible. Most parents argue that a powerful curriculum is what really matters to the success of their youngsters or ward. However, studies has proven that for college kids to efficiently study and maintain what is given by using a powerful curriculum, they ought to have assistance from their teachers and this will be viable if they have interaction and construct a wonderful relationship with the teachers. According to a research conducted by Jill (2001) cited in Bereket, Yohannes and Akililu (2019), it was revealed that college performance correlates with quality of one's interpersonal relationships

and additional developmental outcomes.

According to Knoell (2012), the close emotional dating among teachers and students has an effect on students. For example, students need to recognise the school as a home, even though the school is away from the students' houses. The teachers' devotion to college students' academic performance has been of first-rate help in inspiring students to attain the academic necessities of a college. Nugent (2009) said that according to research from students, it was examined that if teachers take the initiative to build relationships, they likely may want to motivate students to learn. He further argued that research suggests that teachers need to possess a strong belief that creating a relationship plays an important role in the process of motivation towards academic performance. Student academic performance could be enhanced through motivation. Owuamanam and Owuamanam (2002) stated that achievement motivation is aroused in the classroom when the cues elicit an expectancy of goal attainment, and individuals with achievement examined that there is a substantial relationship between teacher-student interplay and college students' academic performance. Rena (2000) cited in Alimi and Balogun (2010) carried out a study and found out that there was a relationship between teacher-student relationship and student academic performance. In a study carried out by Fowler, Bank, Anhalt, Der and Kalis (2008), they found out that there was a relationship between teacher-student interaction and academic performance of students. Also, in a study carried out by Telli, Brok and Cakiroglu (2008) they found out that there was a strong relationship between teacher-student interpersonal relationship and student academic performance.

### *2.3 Attachment Theory*

According to Cherry (2018), attachment theory focuses on the connection between two or more people, in particular, lengthy-term relationships like those among mother and father and children and among romantic partners. According to Bowlby (1969) cited in Omodan and Tsotets (2018), this theory was propounded in 1958 by John Bowlby, a Psychologist, and was published in trilogy *Attachment and Loss* in 1969. Bowlby (1958) cited in Omodan and Tsotets (2018) and Cherry (2018) defined attachment as lasting mental connectedness among humans and that it is far a kind of behaviour focused to establish and hold closeness and get in touch with a grownup or determine who is realistic and attractive to the child's wishes.

According to Bowlby (1969) mentioned in Omodan and Tsotets (2018), the theory argued that after adults offer emotional guide in a predictable, steady, and secure surroundings, it allows kids to be greater self-reliant and learn better, because they are sure that a person will guide and assist them. Krstic (2015) supported this via announcing that when kids feel secure and snug, complementary exploratory structures which encourage them to explore are activated.

In adapting attachment theory to the school scenario, one needs to look at some of the roles of a teacher in the school setting that have to do with teacher-student interaction for learning to take place. Some of the roles are: mediator of learning, parents' substitute (*in-loco-parentis*), confidant to students, and judge of achievement.

Occasionally, students would come across problems that they are unable to solve. They would meet situations that baffle them. In situations like these, the role of the teacher is to mediate so that learning can take place. The teacher is in charge of the learners at least, for a short period and for this period, he or she must play the role of the parents. He or she must show love when it should be shown. A student may decide to take a teacher into confidence. In view of this, the teacher should be ready to render advice as much as possible. The student may find it easier to confide in the teacher than his or her parents, siblings or other family members. The teacher, in his or her status as a facilitator of learning must seldom pass judgements. That a student is aware of his or her shortcomings would be in a better position to make amends where necessary. These amends then should lead to greater achievement or excellent academic performance.

#### *2.4 Research Hypothesis*

One null hypothesis has been formulated for the study:

There is no significant relationship between teachers-student interaction and secondary school student academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

### **3. Method**

The descriptive survey and correlational research methods were used for the study. The population of the study consisted of all Senior Secondary School III and teachers in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample for this study consisted of 1,074 respondents. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study.

The first stage involved the selection of two Local Government Areas from each of the three Senatorial Districts of Ekiti State, Nigeria using stratified random sampling technique. The second stage involved the selection of four secondary schools from each of the six Local Government Areas using simple random sampling technique and this gives a total number of 24 schools. The third stage involved the use of proportionate simple random sampling technique to select 367 teachers and 707 students from 24 secondary schools.

The results of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 of students in selected public secondary schools conducted by the West African Senior School Certificate Examination were used. This is to know the trend of student performance and to compare the relationship between student and data collected from student-teacher interaction.

The instrument tagged, “Teacher-Student Interaction Questionnaire” (TSIQ) was used to collect data for the study. There was also an already validated inventory for the study. For adequate coverage of the topic and clarity of the items for face and content validities, the instrument was shown to specialists in the field of Tests and Measurement and Educational Management. The reliability coefficient ( $r$ ) calculated was 0.74 through the test-retest method, which was high enough to ensure reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered personally by the researchers. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson product moment correlation statistics.

#### 4. Result

The null hypothesis formulated for the study was tested as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Test of relationship between teachers-student interaction and secondary school student academic performance

Item	N	X	SD	r <sub>cal</sub>	r <sub>tab</sub>
Teacher-student interaction	1074	134.76	26.43	0.77*	0.09
Secondary school student academic performance	1074	207.59	45.84		

\*p<0.05 (significant result).

The above table shows the relationship between teachers-student interaction and secondary school student academic performance. The result obtained from the above analysis shows that the r-calculated value (0.77) is greater than r-table value (0.09) and so, the null hypothesis earlier formulated is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between teacher-student interaction and secondary school student academic performance.

#### 5. Discussion

The study revealed that, there was significant positive relationship between teachers-student interaction and secondary school student academic performance. This means that, teachers-student interaction will enhance secondary school student academic performance. This may be due to the fact that teachers made their lesson a student-focused one. This finding is in support of Rena (2000) cited in Alimi and Balogun (2010); Fowler, Bank, Der and Kalis (2008); and Telli, Brok and Cakiroglu (2008) who found out a significant relationship between teacher-student interaction and student academic performance. This finding is also in line with Nugent (2009) who stated that according to research from scholars, it was found out that if teachers take the initiative to build relationships, they possibly could motivate students to learn and Jill (2001) cited in Bereket, Yohannes and Aklilu (2019) who revealed that college performance correlates with quality of one's interpersonal relationships and additional developmental outcomes.

#### 6. Conclusion

This paper reviewed various literatures that are relevant to teacher-student interaction. Based on the finding of this study, it was observed that teacher-student interaction has greater influence on secondary school student academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria. More so,

it was concluded that teacher-student interaction is a necessary ingredient for enhancing secondary school student academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

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